

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

By:

Syeda Farhana Sarfaraz *

Abstract

Since the birth of civilization the human societies developed its narrative structure relating to its needs and survived with alternation and adjustment to absorb the dynamics of evolution. While doing so heir of the society in the world has never accepted the addicts, this disapproved has been universal simultaneously; the curse of addiction has been a stigma to considerable members of every society throughout ages.

During the course of his search man has extracted opium from the poppy plant, cocaine from the leaves of coca bush, and cannabis from the hemp plant. Initially, perhaps he used these only for purpose of relieving pain and discomfort, for enhancing the physical and mental capabilities, and for medicinal and surgical purposes. But the human spirit of innovation must have led to the use of these substances for mood-altering effects and offer, an escape from the real and difficult world of existence to a more agreeable world of fantasy.

Islam is the religion of human welfare delineating the path of righteousness. It guides against the use of intoxicants in so many verses in al Quran. The life of Holy

*) Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Karachi.

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) offers an excellent example action for a prosperous existence. This research study highlights the teaching of Islam regarding the injunction of intoxicants.

Introduction

Never before in the history of mankind, has the abuse of drugs and narcotics been such a threat to the quality of life as it is today. In the contemporary world illicit trafficking in drugs has increasingly assumed a transitional dimension. An unprecedented spurt in the consumptions of alleged drugs among various populations has emerged as a major problem of social development. The disruptive influence of drug abuse on the individual, the family, the workplace, the community and the society has become a matter of grave concern.

Opium, cocaine, and cannabis, are perhaps a few of the oldest natural substances used by the human race. These substances were originally used for their medicinal values. Since they had analgesic / soothing / sedative / hypnotic / stimulating effects. Perhaps, because of their soothing and anxiety relieving effects, these substances began to be used by the saints and peers, recluse and the non-conformists, for concentration and meditation also.

A great variety of more potent and therefore harmful, drugs and narcotics substances flood the markets. The rapid expansion in the field of communications, travel, and trade, international treaties and memorandum of understandings (MOUs) led to a shrinking of the world. The natural barriers, both physical and cultural, broke down under the onslaught of the industrial revolution. The use of machines for producing more and more sophisticated goods, faster development of technology, and then the two wars in the early of the 20th century grave ample opportunity to experiments with raw mood – altering substances and produce drugs of varying potencies and varying effects. A negative effect of these changes was that the problem of

drug abuse became a global problem, affecting all countries, with a difference of degrees only. The deterioration in the global drug abuse scenario has urged the international community as a whole, and the different countries individually, to intensify their efforts of fighting not only the menace of drug abuse, but also illicit cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and peddling of drugs. Drugs abuse is a global phenomenon for reasons of similarity of human nature everywhere, as well as the shrinking of the globe due to the rapid advancements made in the field of transport and communications. Since the production, distribution and sale of drugs offer huge profits, the syndicates developed widespread political and financial power. Wets came to be created; tons of billions of dollars are generated through activities related to drugs.

Pakistan is confronting with a significant drug abuse problem. Trends in drug use patterns indicate a marked increase in heroin consumption that merged during the 1980s. The 1993 National Survey on Drug Abuse, whose results remain by no means undisputed, estimated the number of drug users at 3 million of which approximately 50% were addicted to heroin. Other estimates have suggested that total number of drug abusers may have reached 4 million by 2000.

It is also indicated that sharing and multiple use of injection needles is common practice.

"National Assessment Study on Drug Abuse in Pakistan-2000 shows that there are 5,000,000 chronic heroin users including 60,000 drug injectors in the age bracket of 15-45 years 40% of the total heroin abusers fall in the age bracket of 25-34 years, which is an alarming high rate by international standard. It is a problem of deep magnitude with multiple dimensions. It has serious implications for the socio-economic well

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

being of the individual, family and society at large, which cannot be solved by the government alone, without the active cooperation from different segments of society under a multi-pronged integrated strategy".

Drug abuse has assumed alarming proportions in Pakistan. According to an estimate about 1.5 million heroin addicts consume nearly 50 tons of heroins within Pakistan and since, one addict in a family affects several other members, the number of people suffering directly or indirectly runs into many more millions. This is the fastest growing problem, which cuts across class, rural, urban, provincial, and religious boundaries.

Poor social and economic conditions in Pakistan have a broad impact on Pakistan's overall health situation and increase vulnerability of the general population to drug problems. Recent estimate that 34% of the population lives below the poverty line, and this percentage is higher for those in rural area. A number of socio-economic factors such as youth, unemployment, large disparities between income groups, poverty, urbanization, are known to be linked to drug abuse and crime.

Recent trend suggest a shift from inhaling and smoking heroin to injection of drugs, in particular pharmaceutical drugs, bearing the high risk of an HIV/AIDS epidemic and the spread of other blood borne diseases. Overall, drug addicts have little access to effective treatment with a few exceptions, the services provided by government run drug treatment facilities are limited to the management of acute withdrawal symptoms of 7-10 days duration. Only very few well established NGOs and private clinics offer comprehensive treatment packages including rehabilitation

and social reintegration services, but these services often are too expensive for the average street addict to access.

Islamic concepts regarding drug addiction

Being the most superior of God's creatures, man is blessed with the ability to think, comprehend, take decisions and draw lessons. A person living in a healthy environment is bound to demonstrate strength of character. Conversely, the influence of bad company in a society where a person finds him/herself abandoned in the struggle of life, is likely to have a negative impact. International research has proven that most juvenile convicts in various countries had a history of parental abandonment or negligence. In the absence of a home and guidance on the values of adopting socially acceptable behaviour, they truly up indulging in theft, drug abuse and other social ills. Drug abuse inevitably translates into mental and physical agony. People start taking drugs as a mere source of enjoyment only to end up being addicts. Today, the number of drug users run into millions.

Most of the Quranic verses also refer to alcoholic addiction. However, the principles of addiction to drinking are equally applicable to all forms of narcotic-addiction as delineated in the succeeding arguments. Prior to the advent of Islam, drinking of alcohol was common in Arabia. It was so widespread that it was not possible to stop it one order, lest it may be disobeyed. That is why it was prohibited gradually through Quranic injunctions revealed at three different stages in the following order:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى حَتَّىٰ
تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ ﴾

Translation:

"O believers! do not offer long prayers in a state of inebriation, wait till you understand what you say".(4:43)

With the first commandment, most of the people stopped drinking, since was little during the day time between Zohar, Asr, Maghrib and Isha prayers. However, many continued drinking and could offer prayers even in a state of drunkenness. After some time another commandment was revealed which declared drinking as a major sin.

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِنَّمَا كَيْرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ تَفْعِيلِهِمَا... ﴾

"They ask you regarding drinking and gambling, tell them: both are exceedingly bad; and though they provide some diversion, their evil far exceeds their good".(2:219)

With the revelation of the above commandment, the object was to develop hatred against drinking in the minds of the people. It has the desired effect because many people started to avoid drinking wine. Finally, the last commandment came, which completely forbade drinking declaring it to be "haram".

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

Translation:

"O Believers, this drinking and gambling these games of chance and offerings to idols, are evil occupations. Avoid them and you will be better off."(5:90)

The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) regarding narcotics mostly pertain to drinking, since alcohol was the prevalent form of addiction when he came to reform humanity. The life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) offers an excellent example of action for a prosperous existence. The Holy Prophet practiced and preached honesty and truthfulness, and guided humanity to adhere to high moral principles and spiritual values for the creation of an evil-free society. A person under the influence of narcotics loses control over his mental faculties and inhibitions. In Arabic, the word 'Khumar' means wine. However, all kinds of narcotics cause mental, physical and social disorder and can, therefore, be categorized as 'Khumar.' This has been elaborated by Hazrat Abdullah Bin Abbas in the words of Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as follows:

"Every sedative agent/tranquilizer is alcohol, and alcohol is forbidden"

This leaves no doubt about that all narcotics are forbidden and their use is illegitimate and improper. According to Islamic injunctions, anything that endanger human health is forbidden. After the revelation of this commandment, drinking was completely prohibited till eternity, and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If people drink wine, flog them, if they again drink it, again flog them, if they persist, flog them, and if they do not desist, kill them".

The order for killing the addict was, however, subsequently cancelled by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Prohibition was necessary and drinking had to be declared "Haram" in Islam. Since addiction was widespread, causing many to commit sins and crimes. Many ulemas and scholars call drinking the mother of evils (أم الخبائث), which provokes men to commit sins and crimes. It prevents man from getting near to Allah and leads him astray. The

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

influence of liquor simulates man to sensuousness and licentiousness. They will lose self-respect, develop criminal tendencies and will not hesitate to commit excesses.

Hazrat Abdullah b. Umar narrates in "Tirmizi" that once the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had said that who ever drank, his prayers equivalent to forty days shall not be accepted by Allah Almighty. After the last revelation completely forbidding wine, Hazrat Ibn-e-Umar states in a "Bukhari Sharif" that the Holy Prophet announced that God had ordained wine to be "Haram" which was brewed out of grapes, dates, wheat, honey and barely and that it was such a thing which puts a veil on human intellect. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that anything, which retarded the power of thinking or the senses, its minimum and maximum were both prohibited. In analogy to this, charas and opium have also been forbidden.

Hazrat Ibn-e-Umar quotes the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as saying that God Almighty had closed the doors of heaven on a person who drank, did not obey his parents or did not check indecent or obscene activities when seen in his house. Further he said that he who drunk in this world and died without repentance shall not drink the Holy liquor promised in the Heavens.

Trafficking as viewed by Islam

Per dictates of Islam, all those involved in cultivations preparation, trafficking and trade of narcotics are criminals. Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar has narrated that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) termed the use of every sedative agent for tranquilizer, evil.

Tirmizi and Ibne-Maja quote the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as saying that:

"The persons who prepared wine, who ordered the wine to be prepared, who drank, who served, who kept, who got it stored, who sold, who purchased,

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

who carried and to whom it was brought, were also condemned persons."

Any person plucking, selling, purchasing, carrying, supplying processing and using drugs, is an accomplice to evil. Referring to the saying of Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ), Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullahnarrated the Holy Prophet has having said,

"If large quantity of a thing provides intoxication, its small quantity is also forbidden."

Treatment as viewed by Islam

Per dictates of Islam, all those involved in cultivation, preparation, trafficking and trade of narcotics are criminals. Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umer has narrated that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) termed the use of every sedative agent or tranquilizer, evil. Any person plucking, selling, purchasing, carrying, supplying, possessing and using drugs, is an accomplice to evil. Referring to the sayings of prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Hazrat Jabir Bin Abdullah narrated the Holy Prophet as having said:

"If large quantity of a thing provides intoxication, its small quantity is also forbidden."

Islam does not approve of the use of narcotic substances even for medicinal purposes. Hazrat Tariq Bin Haved-al-Hazn submitted to the holy Prophet that grapes were produced in huge quantity in his area and that their juice was extracted for consumption. The Holy prophet did not approve of it. Thereafter, he again submitted that grape juice was used to treat the sick. The Holy Prophet then said, "It is not a medicine, but a disease itself.

Hazrat Abu Durda (رضي الله عنه) narrated having been advised by the Holy Prophet not to use any sedative substance

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

because narcotics are the key to all evil. Hazrat Usman Razi also narrated the Holy Prophet as having said:

"Save yourself from sedatives and intoxicants as these are the root cause of vice."

Like other divine religions Islam has also highlighted the destructive effects of narcotics and forbade the use of narcotics much before the problem assumed threatening proportions. The Holy prophet, who was the greatest reformer on earth, the following to say in condemnation of narcotics:

Every sedative agent is 'haraam' (illegitimate).

- Even a small quantity of any tranquilizer is 'haraam', irrespective of the fact that its large quantity only provides sedation.
- Narcotics are the cause of chaos, brawls and enmity.
- Narcotics are antidotes for any disease but an embodiment of disease per se.
- God Almighty has not associated the element of cure in anything 'haraam'.
- Cultivation of narcotics is a curse.

Islamic Laws regarding addiction in Pakistan

The following paragraphs describe the substantive offences their punishment and the mode of proof, prior to the Prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order No.IV, 1979 in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

- The factors of committing the crime of drinking wine are two viz: drinking voluntarily or drinking by mistake. A consensus exists that if a person drinks wine, "Hadd" shall be applied to him whether the drinking was less or more and whether it caused intoxication or not.

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

- For the application of Hadd, it is necessary that the intoxicant should be in liquid form and in case of non-liquid substance, Hadd will not be applied. If somebody used hashish or mandrix, etc; Hadd will not be applied to the offender, but he will be liable to "Tazir".
- The offence of drinking can be attributed to a person only when the liquor goes down his throat and if a person took a sip and immediately vomited, Hadd will not be applied.
- About the use of wine as medicine, there is a difference of opinion. According to Imam Malik and Imam Shaafi if a man uses wine as medicine to save his life and the physicians unanimously agree that wine is the only remedy to save the life of the patient, then wine can be given to him to save his life and such a person shall not be liable to hadd.

Conclusion

The basic principles of Islam are in consonance with human psychology. Instead of forbidding its followers from an act, it motivates them to desist from evil. For instance, throughout the holy month of Ramadan, it trains Muslims to develop patience and control over cardinal human desires. If a person can fast for a whole day, there is a very strong likelihood of positive motivation enabling an addict to quit the nasty habit. During the times of Holy Prophet ﷺ, 30 to 40 lashes were awarded to drug addicts. Later on, during Caliphate, it was felt that addiction bred vulgarity and abusiveness. Therefore, on a proposal from Hazrat Ali, the punishment was enhanced to 80 lashes. This punishment proved so effective that narcotics never became a challenge in the vast Muslim empire.

Islam is a religion of logic. It adopts a very clear stance on drugs. Islamic conjunctions provide us with the motivational basis to persuade addicts to quit drugs. It is

Drug Addiction & Islamic Teaching

time such interventions are prioritized to rid humanity in general and Muslims in particular, of the scourge of narcotics abuse. The injunctions of Islam can provide a basis for every practicable antidote to reverse the menace of drug abuse in an Islamic State.

References

- 1- Afzal Dr. A.K., The Philosophy and Evidence in Islam, Lahore, Zia Press, 1986, pp 86-88.
- 2- Fred Zacken, The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Drugs: Heroin the street Narcotics, Burke Publishing Company Limited London, 1988.
- 3- Hamid Ghodse, Drugs and Addictive Behaviour: A guide to treatment, 3rd ed, Cambridge University Press, London, 2002.
- 4- Ikram ul Haq, Pakistan Hash to Heroine, Lahore, Annor Printer & Publisher, 1991.
- 5- Jalal Zai, Moosa Khan, Narcotics and Global Economy: Lahore, Idara-e-Istehkam, 1998.
- 6- M.Z. Khan, Drug use Amongst the College youth, Somaiya, Publications Pvt. Ltd. Bombay, India, 1985
- 7- Saeed, A.R., Narcotics and Islam, Maktaba-i-Islami Press, Lahore, 1983.
- 8- UNODCP, Global Illicit Drug Trends, 2003
- 9- UNODCP. Drug Abuse in Pakistan.: Results from the year 2000 National Assessment Study of Pakistan supported by UNDCP and conducted by Anti Narcotic Force 2002, p 4
- 10- Warsi, Saeed, Drug Abuse and the Community Intervention, International Conference of NGOs for Drug Abuse Prevention, P.N.C.B, Islamabad, 1998
- 11- Wasim Kauser, The Engima of Opiate Abuse in Pakistan, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, 1991.